Bekhorot 33

Daf Yomi · Wednesday, October 21, 2026 · י חשון תשפ״ז · Covers 32b (Mishnah on counting a non-kohen for a firstborn) through 33b (skinning a firstborn whole)

Summary

Bekhorot 33 begins with a Mishnah: Beit Shammai say an Israelite may not be counted with a kohen to eat a firstborn, and Beit Hillel permit it, even a gentile. The Gemara attributes the Mishnah to R. Akiva, citing a baraita in which Beit Shammai allow only a group made up entirely of kohanim, Beit Hillel allow non-kohanim, and R. Akiva allows even a gentile. Beit Shammai compare the firstborn's meat to the breast and thigh of a peace offering, which only kohanim eat. Beit Hillel apply that comparison only to an unblemished firstborn; for a blemished one, the Torah says "the impure and the pure alike may eat it," and an a fortiori argument shows that a non-kohen may eat it. R. Akiva learns from "like the deer and the hart" that it is permitted even to a gentile; the other Tanna uses the repeated phrase for other teachings.

A parallel baraita disputes whether a blemished firstborn may be fed to a woman who is a *niddah*. Beit Shammai forbid it, distinguishing impurity that comes from one's own body, as with the Pesach offering brought in impurity. Beit Hillel permit it, since the verse speaks of "impure" without qualification.

Another baraita forbids skinning an animal from the legs to keep its hide whole on Yom Tov, and likewise for a firstborn or disqualified sacrifices. Rav Chisda attributes the firstborn ruling to Beit Shammai and the disqualified sacrifices ruling to R. Elazar b. R. Shimon, who holds that such animals keep their holiness even after slaughter. The Gemara explains why neither Tanna can be credited with both rulings and asks why R. Elazar does not allow the practice for the Temple's gain. Three reasons are given: the hide gains what the meat loses, it looks like working with sacred animals, and it might lead a person to keep raising flocks of them.

Detailed Summary

1. Mishnah: counting a non-kohen for a firstborn 32b

The first lines of 32b complete the derivation that animal tithe may be neither sold nor redeemed (summary of Bekhorot 32). The new Mishnah turns to who may eat a blemished firstborn.

MISHNAH (BEKHOROT 32b)

בש"א לא ימנה ישראל עם הכהן לבכור, וב"ה מתירין, ואפי' עובד כוכבים.

Beit Shammai say: an Israelite may not be counted with the kohen for a firstborn (Rashi: even if a kohen invites an Israelite guest to eat a blemished firstborn, he may not eat with him). Beit Hillel permit, even a gentile.

WHOSE VIEW? Our Mishnah follows R. Akiva (Rashi: it permits a gentile to eat a firstborn). A baraita teaches: a firstborn may be eaten only by a group made up entirely of kohanim, says Beit Shammai. Beit Hillel say: even non-kohanim. R. Akiva permits even a gentile (Rashi: R. Akiva says Beit Hillel permit even a gentile).

Tosafot – ד"ה פסק מתני' מני רבי עקיבא היא

THE RULING. The Ri says the halacha follows Beit Hillel of the Mishnah, who permit even a gentile, not Beit Hillel of the baraita, who forbid, since an anonymous Mishnah against a dispute in a baraita is followed (Yevamot 42b). All the more so here, where the Mishnah is anonymous in the language of the baraita, which carries extra weight (Shabbat 157a).

R. AKIVA'S REASONING. R. Akiva derives it from "like the deer and the hart," and does not follow R. Elazar HaKappar's teaching (Chullin 28a) that birds require slaughter only by rabbinic law. He may hold like Rebbi, who derives slaughter from "as I commanded you." Alternatively, R. Akiva may hold like R. Elazar HaKappar, deriving one teaching from "deer" and one from "hart," as explained on 15a.

ANOTHER VIEW. Halakhot Gedolot appears to rule like Beit Hillel of the baraita, and implies they disagree with R. Akiva only rabbinically: the fat is permitted to a gentile, since disqualified sacrifices are compared to the deer and hart, but the meat may not be fed to a gentile by rabbinic law.

BURIAL. Several anonymous rulings require a firstborn to be buried: blood clot (21b), slaughter on a non-expert's word (28a), slaughter before showing it (37a), and an animal that died. These fit R. Akiva too. The comparison to the deer and hart applies only where the meat is permitted to Jews; a firstborn that died, was slaughtered without release, or was found *tereifah* is not compared, and requires burial, as R. Akiva himself concedes (Zevachim 104a).

WHY THIS MATTERS. In practice a blemished firstborn's meat may be given even to a gentile, but a firstborn forbidden to Jews is buried.

2. The sources for each view 32b–33a

BEIT SHAMMAI. It says, "And their meat shall be yours, like the breast of waving and the right thigh" (Bamidbar 18:18). Just as there, kohanim may eat but Israelites may not (Rashi: "you and your sons and your daughters with you"), so here.

BEIT HILLEL. That applies to an unblemished firstborn. Of a blemished one it says, "the impure and the pure alike may eat it" (Devarim 15:22). If an impure person, who may not eat lesser sacrifices, may eat a firstborn, then a non-kohen, who may eat lesser sacrifices (Rashi: peace offerings, tithe and Pesach), surely may.

REFUTATION. The impure person is different, since he is permitted in public service (Rashi: if there is no pure kohen in that family, an impure one performs the communal service, even on Shabbat and in impurity). Beit Hillel reply: are we speaking of service? We speak of eating, and a non-kohen's eating is better (Rashi: there is no eating permitted to an impure kohen and forbidden to a non-kohen).

Tosafot – ד"ה ובית הלל ה"מ תם כו'

QUESTION. According to several Tannaim, the verse "and their meat" speaks of a blemished firstborn too. How can an a fortiori argument override the comparison to breast and thigh?

ANSWER. Since the comparison can be applied to an unblemished firstborn, the a fortiori argument takes the blemished one out of it. Similar cases appear in Zevachim 10b and Kiddushin 14a, where a kal va-chomer overrides a comparison or gezeirah shavah.

WHY THIS MATTERS. Beit Hillel's a fortiori argument does not conflict with the comparison; each applies to a different case.

R. AKIVA. It says, "like the deer and like the hart" (Devarim 15:22). Just as the deer and hart are permitted to gentiles, so disqualified sacrifices are permitted to gentiles. And the other Tanna? Deer and hart are written three times: one for R. Yitzchak's teaching, one for R. Oshaya's, and one for R. Elazar HaKappar's (Rashi: on slaughter, Chullin 28a). And R. Akiva? Just as the deer and hart are exempt from the firstborn law, so disqualified sacrifices are exempt.

Tosafot – ד"ה חד לכדרבי יצחק ור' אושעיא

THE ISSUE. Rashi writes that where these teachings appear is not explained.

RABBEINU CHANANEL. It is the teaching in Makkot 22a: one who mates or drives an ox of disqualified sacrifices is lashed, since it is one body that the Torah made into two. That is, the ox itself counts as two species, like the deer and the hart. It does not mean, as commonly explained there, that it is partly sacred and partly ordinary.

WHY THIS MATTERS. It identifies a concrete law derived from the repeated phrase.

3. Feeding a firstborn to a niddah 33a

BARAITA. A firstborn may not be fed to *niddot*, says Beit Shammai. Beit Hillel say: it may. Beit Shammai: "and their meat shall be yours," like the breast and thigh: there, niddot may not (Rashi: an impure person who eats sacred food is liable to *karet*), so here. Beit Hillel: that is unblemished, but of a blemished one it says "the impure and the pure."

BEIT SHAMMAI'S DISTINCTION. That applies where the impurity does not come from his own body. Where it does, no. The Torah distinguishes them, as the Mishnah teaches: a Pesach brought in impurity may not be eaten by *zavim*, *metzora'im*, *zavot*, niddot and women after childbirth (Rashi: although those impure from a corpse eat it).

BEIT HILLEL. There the Torah revealed "impure from a corpse" (Bamidbar 9:10); here it writes "impure" without qualification, so there is no difference.

Tosafot – ד"ה אין מאכילין אותו לנדות

CLARIFICATION. The same applies to one who had a seminal emission. Beit Shammai permit only the kind of impurity permitted for the Pesach, as the Gemara shows next.

WHY THIS MATTERS. Beit Shammai's rule covers all impurity from one's body, not only niddah.

4. Skinning a firstborn whole 33a–33b

BARAITA. One may not skin from the legs on Yom Tov. Likewise one may not skin from the legs a firstborn or disqualified sacrifices.

Rashi – ד"ה ולא בפסולי המוקדשין · ד"ה אין מרגילין בבכור

THE ISSUE. What is this practice?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. Even with a blemished firstborn, one may not skin it from the legs so that the whole hide stays intact, to make a smiths' bellows or a container for honey and oil merchants. The same applies to disqualified sacrifices, even after they were redeemed and slaughtered for eating.

WHY IT MATTERS. The practice treats a sacred animal's hide as a commercial product.

WHO TAUGHT IT? Yom Tov is understandable, since he exerts himself for something not needed that day. But who taught the firstborn? Rav Chisda: Beit Shammai, who say it may not be fed to niddot (Rashi: they hold a blemished firstborn keeps its holiness even after slaughter, and skinning this way damages the meat). Who taught disqualified sacrifices? Rav Chisda: R. Elazar b. R. Shimon.

THE SOURCE. It is taught (Tosafot: a baraita in Temurah 24a): if a person had two sin offerings (Rashi: set aside as backup), one unblemished and one blemished, the unblemished one is offered and the blemished one redeemed. If the blemished one was slaughtered before the unblemished one's blood was sprinkled, it is permitted; after, it is forbidden (Rashi: it becomes a

sin offering whose owner has already gained atonement, which is left to die). R. Elazar b. R. Shimon says: even if the meat is in the pot when the unblemished one's blood is sprinkled, it is forbidden (Rashi: disqualified sacrifices keep their holiness even after slaughter).

Tosafot – ד"ה דתניא היו לפניו שתי חטאות כו'

QUESTION. This baraita is in Temurah 24a. But the Mishnah there permits the blemished one in cases where the baraita forbids it, both for the Sages and for R. Elazar b. R. Shimon.

ANSWER. The Mishnah speaks where the blemished one was redeemed onto the unblemished one, so all its holiness passed into the unblemished one; it is then unlike a sin offering whose owner gained atonement. The baraita speaks where the unblemished one came through its own holiness and the blemished one was redeemed for money, so its holiness did not lapse and it resembles a sin offering whose owner gained atonement.

WHY THIS MATTERS. The two sources address different cases and do not conflict.

ONE TANNA FOR BOTH? Let Rav Chisda attribute it all to Beit Shammai! Perhaps Beit Shammai say this only of a firstborn, whose holiness is from the womb, but not of disqualified sacrifices. Let him attribute it all to R. Elazar b. R. Shimon! Perhaps he says this only of disqualified sacrifices, which are strong enough to seize their redemption money, but not of a firstborn.

THE TEMPLE'S GAIN. Does R. Elazar b. R. Shimon not hold that all disqualified sacrifices are sold in the market and weighed by the litra, since there is gain for the Temple? (Rashi: here too, the hide sells for more, so he would pay more to redeem it.)

THREE ANSWERS. Rav Mari b. Rav Kahana: what the hide gains, the meat loses (Rashi: he cuts into the meat while peeling it with the hide). In the West they said in Ravina's name: it looks like working with sacred animals (Rashi: selling the hide for a bellows while it is still on the animal). R. Yose b. Avin: it is a decree, lest he raise whole flocks of them.

Rashi – ד"ה שמא יגדל עדרים עדרים

THE ISSUE. How would skinning lead to raising flocks?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. According to all, skinning this way is forbidden. If it were permitted, he would delay slaughtering until he found buyers for whole hides; meanwhile flocks of disqualified sacrifices would grow, leading to the offense of shearing them or working them.

WHY IT MATTERS. The prohibition guards against misuse of sacred animals that remain alive.

The next Mishnah, on letting blood from a firstborn that is seized by excess blood, begins on 33b and is covered in the summary of Bekhorot 34.

The full picture in plain language

The daf asks who may share a blemished firstborn's meat with the kohen. Beit Shammai treat it like the kohen's portion of a peace offering, reserved for kohanim and for the pure. Beit Hillel apply that comparison only to an unblemished firstborn; once it is blemished, the Torah al-

lows "the impure and the pure" to eat it, so non-kohanim and even niddot may share it. R. Akiva compares it to the deer and the hart and allows even a gentile, and Tosafot rule this way, while noting that a firstborn forbidden to Jews must still be buried.

The baraita against skinning sacred animals whole reflects the view that their sanctity lingers after slaughter. Rav Chisda assigns the firstborn ruling to Beit Shammai and the disqualified sacrifices ruling to R. Elazar b. R. Shimon. Even the Temple's financial gain does not justify the practice, because it damages the meat, looks like using sacred animals for work, and could tempt the owner to keep them alive.

Glossary

Hebrew	Transliteration	Meaning in this sugya
ימנה	*yimaneh*	Be counted in the group that eats the sacrifice.
חזה ושוק	*chazeh ve-shok*	The breast and thigh of a peace offering, eaten by kohanim.
הטמא והטהור	*ha-tamei ve-ha-tahor*	"The impure and the pure": the verse permitting a blemished firstborn.
כצבי וכאיל	*ka-tzvi ve-kha-ayal*	"Like the deer and the hart": blemished sacrifices treated like ordinary game.
טומאה יוצאה עליו מגופו	*tum'ah yotzei'ah alav mi-gufo*	Impurity coming from one's own body, such as niddah or zav.
מרגילין	*margilin*	Skinning from the legs to keep the hide whole.
חטאת שכיפרו בעליה	*chatat she-kipru be'aleha*	A sin offering whose owner already gained atonement.

Sources: Gemara with relevant Rashi and Tosafot.